Old timers I Remember.

On my first arrival in this town of Edmonton, like many another Old Country boy. I looked around the river bank & alas then (Xmas 1906) there was not much ice to be seen as it was ice & snow bound from the mountains to Lake Winnipeg. my first job was firing the boilers in the old south side power house. Mr. Ewing a fine old Scot, long since gone to his rest, was the engineer in charge, I having been raised on the river Orwell, in East Anglia, I wanted to be near water, & on it, so after ten years at sea I wanted to see a big piece of land & get as far away from sea as I could, hence I chose Edmonton but the water still called me, so as soon as the ice went out - which was very late, & by the way, winter of 1906-7. came to be known as the hard winter,
I went to Mr Jock Walker, pioneer since about the 1880's owned & operated the saw mill across the river from the Hudsons bay Fort. also a coal mine up the river bank from the lumber yard & the ferry across the river, near what is now the 5th bridge, this ferry Jock had built in pontoon order, was installed by him just in time to carry the troops across, that went after the rebellion "Riel". but a little about the ferry!
my first job with Jock Walker, was operating this rather crude & unwieldy scow, but nevertheless & very essential link as the only other means of crossing the river except the old low level bridge,
the cable on which it ran, so Jock told me, he went & got it from Winnipeg, how? with a yoke of oxen says he & it took me all of six months there & round trip (2000. miles across heathers prairies, many rapids & 50° below blizzards) & Jock simply said, I went to Winnipeg & got it.

when the true history of our old Pioneers come to be written I trust this epic of that prince of pioneers will have a front page; for remember this has all happened in our time, but will rank with the finest feats of all time. about the time I speak there were two small river steamers also the property of Jock, the old one City of Athabasca, which was used to carry supplies up river to the logging camps, & later a bigger one. the City of Edmonton, whose chief bid to fame seems to be, taking a crowd of hippies on moonlight voyages down to clover bar or up to big island. purely bent on pleasure music & dancing &c.
the big flood in the summer of 1915 I believe wrecked them both.
I remember the first trip on the Athabasca, as before mentioned it was the summer of 1907. the same year that the Dominion Govt purchased the herd of buffaloo from one, Michael Pablo an Indian. I believe from Montana. they were shipped up to Edmonton in a cattle train I was running the ferry at the time & went up the hill just below the H.B Fort & watched them go by on their way to Lamont,
just before this event a very tragic accident happened at the coal mine aforementioned, a fire started in the mine one saturday night just as the night shift went on duty, some fire, or was it seven men, all there were in the mine were burned to death among the helpless I stood at the cage mouth all night helping when I could to haul up the remains by hand, the sons of England, keenest body of which I was a member, gave them a burial in the cemetery south of Strathcona I have a map of the procession yet; we walked both ways. I thought it a long way out: as I said the old steamboat was getting ready for a trip up river with supplies for the river drive & to see her steaming up my feet itched for a trip so away we went with much hissing snorting & pounding Jock himself going up too but this was not all, beer & whittles, as soon as we got under way I went up on the bridge I think Capt Pearce was in command, after he had spit through the window a couple of times

he suggested it was getting near dinner time, Can ye cook says he? no says I only for myself, thinking of Mr Walker who was on the boat, beside the other members of the crew, however with bakers bread spuds eggs & raw belly a can of jam for dessert, we made out for supper, late at night we tied up, having made some 25 miles or so, about noon next day it was all hands & the cook digging coal from the river bank. next day it was digging coal, or if no seam showed up we went ashore with axes & saws & cut cord wood, at one spot we found it hard to dig coal, so one of the hands suggested a stick of dynamite. he evidently didnt know coal or dynamite for somehow or other he didnt get away in time & we spent half an hour digging him from under lumps of dirt & coal a very sick looking boy & he only did light duty for the rest of the trip but this pleased me immensely as he took over the chips job, from me. on reaching the narrower parts of the river where there is sometimes two or even three channels the old tub mostly bumped over one, on one rapid (right below the spot where I eventually homesteaded) we looked around the bend, two or three times & as many times drifted back again I saw the great Jock" standing by the escape valve, & in order to help the old tank over the rapids he stood outside on a narrow ledge of boat with one foot holding down the valve so as to conserve every ounce of steam, even if the whole shebang should blow to kingdom come he intended we should climb that rapid & we did, so in about five or six days we reached a point about where Rock Rapid Post Office is now or was there some 15 years ago, & unloaded our supplies for the river hogs who were then a few miles further up stream yet.
the night before this when at the spot where the Berrymore ferry now cross the river, we were looking for a cosy spot to tie up for the night when my eyes spotted what looked like a bundle of blankets just awash on a gravel bar on the other side

I drew Capt Price's attention to this; nope, just a dead head, meaning a wata soaked log the float partially submerged, generally one end just showing above wata, however I was curious enough to launch the boat, an old flat-bottom tub almost square, & should have had an auxiliary engine to pull her, But no one else being interested I went over by myself & before I got very near, wished I had minded my own business for it was the body of a big man floating face down & his feet & hands dragging the gravel, so with the painter I tied him fast & rowed back to the south side well below the steam-boat, but this was a chore nobody wanted. but it had to be done, all we could find by way of identification was a small purse containing some U.S. silver pieces, some U.S. stamps & note book with probably logging figures & a U.S.M.O. receipt, jack-knife & 38 shell. with these letters tattooed in India Ink on his left hand M V P. between thumb & fore finger. he had blue eyes fair hair was about 40 years old weighed over 200 lbs & was over six feet. these descriptions & details I sent down by Capt Price to R.C.M.P. the only answer I ever received, some months later, by the Capt, was (they said it was O.K.) the interment was not easy, solid gravel & pick and coal scoop not just all you need to get into that we made a very rough & very big box out of slabs that we rustled on the boat, & this was July, & notably the body had been in the wata a month, we several times had to run to windward to revive ourselves we finally got it done in time to get ready for a new days work, long days on river steamers those times, 4 o'clock turn out & if your lucky turn in 11 o'clock. I made a little cross, also very rough & cut on it the date etc. also the identification marks & put it at his head (several years later I went down there from a raft & the bank for 200 feet had gone into the river

and deep water running over the spot.
our only towline was now anchored in the bed of
frozen men, the bar where we found him was then
dubbed, dead mans bar, & probably will stay that way
that summer proved to be the worst for several years to come
no less than three other men were drowned (to my knowledge
before freeze up, within my 30 miles of that stretch of river.
at the up stream end of our trip I decided to go logging
so hired me out to a skidding gang on one of the flats
below Rocky Rapids, I had bought me an old 30-30. just in case
I should run out of a meal some time but some how or other it
was always in the army place at the right time, for instance one
sunday during the rasp berry season, & raspberries certainly did grow
in that district the finest I have ever seen in any country, thousands
of acres of them & nobody to eat them but a few lumber jacks &
lots of bears, bears, every day could be seen around the river bank
deer & moose were also plentiful both & very tame. nobody bothering them
but about my first "bear", on sunday one hot day I had picked a can
of rasp berries from amongst the billions of mosquitos, & gone out on to
the river bar to escape some of these pests, had eaten my berries, & intended
to have a little snooze so picked me out a big balm of gilead that had washed
down with the flood & caught up on a gravel spit - was just about
asleep when the gravel seemed to be rolling so decided something must
be moving I got to my knees to stand up & look over the trunk of the balm
at the exact moment the bear decided to look over & see what was on
my side of the tree, he literally jammed right into my face (I could
smell his breath for the next several years) I dropped, the bear dropped &
one of us was more scared right, so after an hour or so, or maybe a
minute I took courage to look again & there was the bear some,

¼ a mile going straight in the Rocky Mountains,
on second thoughts I believe we were both scared I never told
any of the crew for they were the bravest men I ever saw together
in the tents. A Belgian working with us at the time, (very brave,
volunteered to go to another camp (about ten miles away) for something
the cook needed very badly, he apparently got there alright and
started out with his pack in a gunny sack (about 40 lbs)
just before dark there was some wild yelling & bush breaking &
La Belgique minus hat coat & gunny-sack fell into the tent all in
sight, he seldom mentioned the incident except that a bear had chased
him, that fall some two months later I accidently came across the
self same gunny sack & its contents, scattered through the bush quite
near the other camp La Belgique had run for nearly 10. miles.
he confessed to me much later that something scared him & he began to
lighten his pack by throwing it away piecemeal as he neared our camp
he was ashamed to be had thrown his groceries away

Glody Young
Thorsby

OLD TIMERS I REMEMBER

Spindler, Wm,

On my first arrival in this town of Edmonton, like many another Old Country boy, I looked around the river bank and, alas, then (Christmas 1906) there was not much to be seen as it was ice and snow bound from the mountains to Lake Winnipeg. My first job was firing the boilers in the old south side power house. Mr. Ewing, a fine old Scot, long since gone to his rest, was the engineer in charge. I having been raised on the river Owvell, in East Anglia, I wanted to be near water, or on it. After ten years at sea I wanted to see a big piece of land and get as far from sea as I could, hence I chose Edmonton, but the water still called me. So as soon as the ice went out, which was very late -- and by the way, the winter of 1906-07 became known as the hard winter -- I went to Mr. Jock Walter, pioneer since about the 1800's, who owned and operated the saw mill across the river from the Hudson's Bay fort, also a coal mine up the river bank from the lumber yard and the ferry across the river (near what is now the 5th Street bridge). This ferry, Jock had pride in pointing out, was installed by him just in time to carry the troops across that went after the notorious Riel. But a little about the ferry! My first job with Jock Walter was operating this rather crude and unwieldy scow, but nevertheless a very essential link as the only other means of crossing the river was the old low level bridge. The cable on

on which it ran, so Jock told me,he went and got it from Winnipeg. How? With a yoke of oxen, says he, and it took me all of six months the round trip (2000 miles across trackless prairies, burning sands, and 50 below blizzards), and Jock simply said, "I went to Winnipeg and got it."

When the true history of our old pioneers comes to be written, I trust this epic of that prince of pioneers will have a front page, for remember this has all happened in our time, but will rank with the finest facts of all time. About the time I speak, there were two small river steamers, also the property of Jock, the old one City of Strathcona, which was used to carry supplies up river to the logging camps, and later a bigger one, the City of Edmonton, whose chief bid to fame appears to be taking a crowd of trippers on moonlight voyages down to Clover Bar or up to Big Island purely bent on pleasure, music, and dancing, etc.

The big flood in the summer of 1915, I believe, wrecked them both. I remember the first trip on the Strathcona, as before mentioned, it was the summer of 1907, the same year that the Dominion Government purchased the herd of buffalo from one, Michael Pablo, an Indian, I believe, from Montana. They were shipped up to Edmonton in a cattle train. I was running the ferry at the time and went up the hill just below the Hudson's Bay fort and watched them go by on their way to Lamont. Just before this event a very tragic accident happened at the coal mine aforementioned; a fire started in the mine one Saturday night just as the night shift went on duty. Some five, or was it seven, men -- all there were in the mine -- were burned to death. Among the other helpers, I stood at the cage mouth

all night helping when I could to haul up the remains by hand. The Sons of England, benefit party, of which I was a member, gave them a burial in the cemetery south of Strathcona. I have a map of the procession yet; we walked both ways. I thought it a long way out.

As I said, the old steamboat was getting ready for a trip upriver with supplies for the river drive. To see her steaming up made my feet itch for a trip, so away we went with much hissing, snorting, and grunting. Jock went up, too. This was not all beer and skittles. As soon as we got under way I went up on the bridge. I think Captain Pearce was in command. After he had spat through the window a couple of times he suggested it was getting near chaw time. "Can ye cook?" says he. "No," says I, "only for myself," thinking of Mr. Walter who was on the boat, besides the other members of the crew. However with baker's bread, spuds, eggs, and sow belly, a can of jam for dessert, we made out for supper.

Late at night we tied up having made some twenty-five miles or so. About noon next day, it was all hands and the cook digging coal from the river bank. Next day it was digging coal, or if no seam showed up, we went ashore with axes and saws and cut cord wood. At one spot we found it hard to dig coal, so one of the hands suggested a stick of dynamite. He evidently didn't know coal or dynamite for some how or other he didn't get away in time, and we spent half an hour digging him from under lumps of dirt and coal. A very sick looking boy he was, and he could do only light

duty for the rest of the trip; but this please me immensely as he took over the chef's job from me.

On reaching the narrower parts of the river where there are sometimes two, or even three, channels, the old tub snorted heavier than ever. On one rapid -- right below the spot where I eventually homesteaded -- we looked around the bend two or three times, and as many times drifted back again. I saw the great Jock standing by the escape valve, and in order to help the old tank over the rapids, he stood outside on a narrow ledge of board, with one foot holding down the valve so as to conserve every ounce of steam. Even if the whole she-bang should blow to kingdom come he intended we should climb that rapid, and we did. In about five or six days we reached a point about where Rock Rapid Post Office is now, or was some fifteen years ago, and unloaded our supplies for the river boys who were then a few miles farther up stream.

The night before this, when at the spot where the Berrymoor ferry now cross the river, we were looking for a cozy spot to tie up for the night when my eyes spotted what looked like a bundle of blankets just awash on a gravel bar on the other side . I drew Captain Pearce's attention to this. Nope, just a dead head, meaning a water soaked log, the float partially submerged and generally with one end just showing above water. However, I was curious enough to launch the boat -- an old flat bottom tub almost square and should have had an auxillary engine to pull her. Now no one else being interested, I went over by myself and before I got very near, wished I had minded my own business; for it was the body of

a big man floating face down with his feet and hands digging the gravel. So with the painter I tied him fast and rowed back to the south side, well below the steamboat, but this was a chore nobody wanted, but it had to be done. All we could find by way of identification was a small purse containing some U. S. silver pieces, some U. S. stamps, and a notebook with probably logging figures and a U. S. Money Order receipt, a jackknife and some 33 shells with these letters tattooed in India ink on his left hand: M. V. D. between his thumb and forefinger. He had blue eyes, fair hair, was about forty years old, weighed over 200 pounds, and was over six feet. These identifications and details I sent down by Captain Pearce to R.C.M.P. The only answer I ever received, some months later, by the captain, was that they said it was Okay. The interment was not easy -- soild gravel, and pick and coal scoop was not all you need to get into that. We made a very rough and very big box out of slabs that we rustled on the boat. Since this was July and probably the body had been in the water a month, we several times had to run to windward to revive ourselves. We finally got it done in time to get ready for a new day's work -- long days on river steamers those times, 4 o'clock turn out and, if you're lucky, turn in at 11 o'clock. I made a little cross, also very rough, and cut on it the date, etc., also identification marks, and put it at his head. Several years later I went ashore there from a raft and found that the bank for 200 feet had gone into the river and deep water was running over the spot.

Our lowly traveler was now anchored in the port of forgotten men, the bar where we found him was then dubbed, dead man's bar, and probably will stay that way. That summer proved to be the worse

for several years to come. No less than three other men were drowned (to my knowledge) before freeze up, within, say, thirty miles of that stretch of river.

At the upstream end of our trip, I decided to go logging so hired me out to a skidding gang on one of the flat below Rocky Rapids, I had bought me an old 30-30 just in case I should run out of a meal some time, but somehow or other it was always in the wrong place at the right time; for instance, one Sunday during the raspberry season, and raspberries certainly did grow in that district the finest I have ever seen in any country, thousands of acres of them and nobody to eat them but a few lumber jacks and lots of bears. Bears every day could be seen around the river bank; deer and moose were also plentiful and very tame as nobody bothered them. But about my first bear: one Sunday, a very hot day, I had picked a can of raspberries from among the billions of mosquitoes and had gone out on the river to escape some of these pests, had eaten my berries, and intended to have a little snooze, so had picked me out a big balm of gilead that had washed down with the flood and caught up on a gravel pit. I was just going to sleep when the gravel seemed to be rolling so decided something must be moving. I got to my knees to stand up and took a look over the trunk of the balm at the exact moment the bear decided to look over and see what was on my side of the tree. He literally grunted right in my face (I could smell his breath for the next several years); I dropped, the bear dropped, and one of us was sure scared right. After an hour or so, or maybe a minute, I took courage to look again, and there was the bear some quarter of a mile going straight for the Rocky Mountains. On second thought,

I believe we were both scared. I never told any of the crew, for they were the bravest men I ever say (together in the tent). A Belgian working with us at the time, very brave, volunteered to go to another camp, about ten miles away, for something the cook needed very badly. He apparently got there all right and started out with his pack in a gunny sack (about 40 pounds). Just before dark there was some wild yelling and brush breaking, and La Belgque minus hat, coat, and gunny sack fell into the tent all in sight of us. He seldom mentioned the incident except that a bear had chased him. That fall some two months later, I accidentally came across the self same gunny sack and its contents scattered through the brush quite near the other camp. La Belgque had run for nearly ten miles. He confessed to me much later that something scared him and he began to lighten his sack by throwing it away piecmeal as he neared our camp. He was ashamed he had thrown his groceries away.